

REMARKS

Claims 6 and 16-37 are pending in the application. Claims 6 and 16-37 were rejected in the Office action dated November 5, 2004. Claims 6, 16, and 30 are independent claims while claims 17-29 depend from claim 16 and claims 31-37 depend from claim 30.

In view of the amendments herein, reconsideration and allowance of claims 6 and 16-37 is respectfully requested. Applicants will respond to the Office action herein referencing the paragraph numbers contained in the Office action.

1. Paragraph 1 in the Office action includes a recitation of 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). No response is necessary from Applicant.

2. Claims 6 and 16-24, 26-28 and 30-37 were rejected in the Office action as being unpatentable over Patton, et al. under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claim 6 has been amended herein to recite that the trench includes an inlet end and an outlet end and to include "a pump and conduit for circulating liquid from the inlet end of the trench to said outlet end of said liquid treatment zone." Support for this amendment is found on p. 11 of the Applicants' specification as well as Applicants' FIG. 1.

The stated purpose for the pump and conduit is to circulate liquid in the trench from the inlet end to the outlet end of the trench in order to increase the flow of liquid through the bag as it is conveyed through the trench from the inlet end to the outlet end. Pressure from the increased volume of water on the outlet side of the bag causes an increased flow of liquid through the permeable bag.

The Patton et al. reference does not describe, disclose or suggest a pump and conduit to circulate the liquid in the trench from the inlet end to the outlet end as recited in Applicants' amended claim 6. Furthermore, FIG. 1 of the Patton, et al reference is devoid of a depiction of a trench including the recited pump and conduit.

Accordingly, the rejection in the Office action of claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is overcome. Reconsideration and allowance of claim 6, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Claims 16 and 30 have been amended herein to recite moving the bag down a first and a second vat from an inlet end to an outlet end "while circulating said liquid from said inlet to said outlet." Support for this amendment is found on p. 11 of the Applicants' specification as well as Applicants' FIG. 1.

The stated purpose for the recited step is to circulate liquid in the vats from the inlet end to the outlet end of each vat in order to increase the flow of liquid through the bag as it is conveyed through the vat from the inlet end to the outlet end. Pressure from the increased volume of water on the outlet side of the bag causes an increased flow of liquid through the

permeable bag.

The Patton et al. reference does not describe, disclose or suggest circulation of the liquid in each vat from the inlet end to the outlet end as recited in Applicants' amended claim 6. Furthermore, FIG. 1 of the Patton, et al reference is devoid of a depiction of a trench including a pump and conduit or any means of circulating the liquid as recited.

Accordingly, the rejection in the Office action of claims 16 and 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is overcome. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 16 and 30, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Claims 17-24 and 26-28 depend from claim 16 and are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with regard to claim 16. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 17-24 and 26-28 is respectfully requested.

Claims 31-37 depend from claim 30 and are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with regard to claim 30. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 31-37 is respectfully requested.

3. Claim 25 is rejected in the Office action under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Patton et al. in view of Oldershaw. Claim 25 depends from claim 16 and includes all of the limitations of claim 16. Accordingly, claim 25 is allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with regard to claim 16. The Oldershaw reference does not disclose or

teach the circulation of liquid in a vat from the inlet end to the outlet end in order to increase the flow of liquid through the bag. Reconsideration and allowance of claim 25 is respectfully requested.

4. Claim 29 is rejected in the Office action under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Patton et al. in view of Traut, et al. Claim 29 depends from claim 16 and includes all of the limitations of claim 16. Accordingly, claim 29 is allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with regard to claim 16. The Traut, et al. reference does not disclose or teach the circulation of liquid in a vat from the inlet end to the outlet end in order to increase the flow of liquid through the bag. Reconsideration and allowance of claim 29 is respectfully requested.

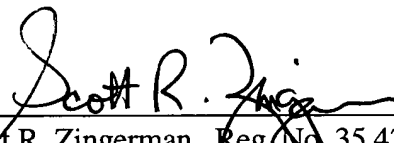
5. Claim 37 is rejected in the Office action under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Patton et al. in view of Hendrix, et al. Claim 37 depends from claim 30 and includes all of the limitations of claim 30. Accordingly, claim 37 is allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with regard to claim 30. The Hendrix, et al. reference does not disclose or teach the circulation of liquid in a vat from the inlet end to the outlet end in order to increase the flow of liquid through the bag. Reconsideration and allowance of claim 37 is respectfully requested.

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No additional fee is believed to be due. However, if any fee is made payable by the filing of this paper, please consider this our authorization to charge the Deposit Account of the undersigned, No. 06-0540.

Respectfully submitted,

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